

# Killings, attacks spike in Kogi, Imo, Bayelsa

By Clement A. Oloyede, Idowu Isamotu & Abbas Jimoh (Abuja), Tijani Labaran (Lokoja) & Bassey Willie (Yenagoa)

**A**t least three persons have been killed with several others injured in separate attacks in Kogi and Bayelsa states ahead of the Saturday gubernatorial election.

This is also coming on the heels of alleged attacks on oppositions in Imo State where election is also taking place on Saturday.

While in Kogi State, the incumbent governor, Yahaya Bello of the All Progressives Congress (APC) is concluding his second term and only hoping to install his preferred candidate, the governors of Imo, Hope Uzodinma (APC) and that of Bayelsa, Douye Diri of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) are contesting in the polls for their second terms.

Despite heavy deployment of security across these states, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), civil society organisations and others have continued to express concerns on the wave of insecurity and election-related violence in the three states.

At the weekend, the United Kingdom issued a travel advisory to its citizens in Nigeria to avoid traveling to the three states where the off-circle governorship elections will be taking place this Saturday.

## SDP, police trade words over attack in Kogi

In Kogi State, several people were feared killed in Anyigba, Dekina LGA, when suspected gunmen attacked the residence of the Director General of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) campaign organisation, Sheikh Ibrahim Jibrin.

But the police said the incident was a raid carried out following an intelligence report that the resident was housing political thugs with dangerous weapons.

Daily Trust learnt that the incident happened around 5:30am on Tuesday.

It was gathered that the alleged gunmen reportedly opened fire after removing the gate of the house with their truck.

In the process, many people were reported to have been caught in the ensued cross fire between the security details of the SDP chieftain and the invading forces.



Inspector General of Police, Egbetokun Olukayode

It was further gathered that while the SDP chieftain survived the attack, one of his police details, identified as Inspector Samson Atabo was confirmed killed in the process.

The Director of Communication and Strategy of the campaign organisation, Isaiah Davies Jjele, was among those reported to have been taken away by the invading forces while Jibrin is said to be recovering from the shock in an undisclosed hospital in the area.

The running mate to SDP governorship candidate, Samuel Abenemi confirmed the incident, appealing to the police not to be partisan, but to observe fair play in their dealing with the situation on ground.

Giving the official account of what transpired, spokesman for the police in the state, SP William Aya, said in a statement that: "The Special Joint Operation involving the Nigeria Police, Department of State Security and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) carried out a raid on Tuesday 07/11/2023 where political thugs are being housed by political parties."

"During the cordon and search operation, the team, even after identifying themselves, came under serious gun fire and in response, three of the political thugs were gunned down and two AK47 rifles recovered while two members of the team sustained gunshot injuries and seven

suspects arrested."

The state Commissioner of Police, Onuoha Benthland said "The police have a mandate to raid houses suspected to be harbouring thugs", stressing that "When the chips are down, we will know what a civilian is doing with AK-47 rifle."

## Attack an assassination attempt on me—SDP candidate

But reacting, the governorship candidate of the SDP for Saturday's governorship election in Kogi State, Muritala Yakubu Ajakpa alleged that the attack was carried out by suspected thugs and policemen and was an assassination attempt against him.

He told reporters on Tuesday in Abuja that it was by the grace and mercy of Allah that he is alive as he could have been killed by the attackers who invaded the residence.

"The claim of looking for thugs is a ruse to assassinate me. There were no thugs in that house. All the people they killed were policemen while those abducted were policemen or campaign staff who went to Anyigba as an advance party."

"In the course of the attack, which lasted for almost two hours between 5am and 7am this (Tuesday) morning, three policemen officially attached to protect me from the Special Protection Unit of the Nigerian Police were killed by the rogue force hurriedly put together by

the Commissioner of Police, Mr Berthrand Unuoha, the Kogi Director of DSS, Mr Tosin Ajayi and the Officer Commanding the NNS, Lugard Ajulu for that purpose deliberate purpose," he alleged.

He, therefore, urged the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, to redeploy the Kogi State Commissioner of Police, Mr Berthrand Unuoha, like he did in Imo State, to guarantee the sanctity of the Saturday's election while also calling on President Bola Tinubu to take action on other security officials complicit in the ongoing violence in the state.

## Thugs attack PDP chieftain in Bayelsa

In a related development, there was tension in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State capital as suspected thugs attacked the residence of a PDP chieftain, Chief Diekivie Ikiogha with dynamites.

The incident happened near the residence of former President Goodluck Jonathan at the Kpansia axis of Yenagoa metropolis on Tuesday.

Some residents of the area said they heard a loud explosion from the compound around in the early hours of Tuesday.

Ikiogha, who is a former Commissioner for Agriculture and Chief of Staff at the Government House, Yenagoa, could not be reached for comment. He recently returned to the PDP, after he defected to the APC years ago.

In the build-up to the governorship polls in Bayelsa State, Ikiogha moved from the APC to the Labour Party, where he bought the form and contested the primary election but lost to the LP governorship candidate, Udengs Eradiri.

Though the information of the attack is sketchy, the police spokesman in Bayelsa State, CSP Asinin Butswat, said the police state command has dispatched the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit (EOD) to the scene.

Also, two unidentified persons were also reported to have sustained gunshot wounds after they were attacked by yet-to-be-identified thugs within the Opolo axis of the state capital.

Daily Trust reports that there has been tension ahead of the governorship election with political parties attacking each other. Last weekend, political thugs attacked PDP supporters in

Nembe Local Government where one person was killed while others were injured.

## Police announce directives for polls

The Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, on Tuesday announced that there will be no vehicular movement in Imo, Kogi and Bayelsa states between 12:01am and 6pm on Saturday.

He also said the movement of canoes, boats, ships and other means of transportation via waterways have been barred starting from 12:00am on Saturday till the end of the exercise in the evening.

The police chief explained that the decision was in line with measures put in place to ensure free, fair and credible elections in the three states, adding that 80% of the landmass in Bayelsa is covered by water bodies.

Egbetokun, who spoke through the Force spokesman, Oluwayomi Adejobi at a press briefing at Force Headquarters, also barred some state security outfits like Ebubeagu and other quasi outfits from carrying out operations during the exercise.

According to him, both marine and gunboats have been deployed in the three states considering the riverine terrain of the states, insisting that the states have been fortified with different security equipment including helicopters that will be for aerial patrol.

"In a bid to ensure a smooth electioneering processes, the Inspector-General of Police has ordered the distribution of an additional 220 operational vehicles, including water cannons, Armoured Personnel Carriers, gun boats for riverine areas, helmets, bullet proof vests, tear gas canisters etc, to the three affected states to intensify security arrangements for the elections to augment the already deployed assets."

The IGP further disclosed to newsmen that no fewer than three Deputy Inspectors-General of Police (DIGs) have been deployed to each state for proper supervision of the election.

He listed the DIG in charge of the Department of Training and Development, Frank Mba; the DIG in charge of the Department of Force Intelligence, Habu Sani and the DIG in charge of the Department of Information and Communication Technology as some of the senior officers deployed to Imo, Kogi and Bayelsa states respectively.

# Proliferation of drones threat to aviation sector – NSA

By Idowu Isamotu

The National Counter-Terrorism Centre in the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) says the proliferation of drones constitutes a threat to aviation security.

It called for proactive strategies to address the challenges posed by the rapid increase in drone usage.

The centre noted that drones have changed the way wars, especially low-intensity conflicts, are being waged.

The National Coordinator of the Centre, Rear Admiral Yaminu Musa (rtd), disclosed these in Abuja yesterday at the Nigeria-United Kingdom joint threats and counter-drones workshop.

According to him, ever-emerging uses and interest

in drone acquisition make its proliferation inevitable.

"Today, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have evolved from being tools of reconnaissance to being used as contemporary weapons. Drones have become a means and have changed the way wars, especially low-intensity conflicts, are being waged."

"The ever-emerging uses and interest in drone acquisition

make its proliferation inevitable if the use and global market for UAVs, weaponised or otherwise, are not regulated.

"It is imperative that we develop an in-depth understanding of this threat and work together to devise robust and proactive strategies to mitigate the adverse challenges and strengthen aviation security," Musa said.

He added: "There is no doubt

that the impact of terrorism on internal travel could have profound negative impacts on the human, social and economic development of any country.

"Tourists' risk perception of a country is often associated with the safety of a country's aviation and maritime travel, and such perception has political, social, and economic implications for the country."